

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

GUZ 33 Micah

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV -
XXXIII*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
33 Micah
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Mic 1:1 During the time that Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, the LORD gave this message to Micah, who was from the town of Moresheth. The LORD revealed to Micah all these things about Samaria and Jerusalem.

The Coming Destruction

Mic 1:2 Hear this, all you nations; listen to this, all who live on earth! The Sovereign LORD will testify against you. Listen! He speaks from his heavenly temple.

Mic 1:3 The LORD is coming from his holy place; he will come down and walk on the tops of the mountains.

Mic 1:4 Then the mountains will melt under him like wax in a fire; they will pour down into the valleys like water pouring down a hill.

Mic 1:5 All this will happen because the people of Israel have sinned and rebelled against God. Who is to blame for Israel's rebellion? Samaria, the capital city itself ! Who is guilty of idolatry in Judah? Jerusalem itself !

Mic 1:6 So the LORD says, "I will make Samaria a pile of ruins in the open country, a place for planting grapevines. I will pour the rubble of the city down into the valley, and will lay bare the city's foundations.

Mic 1:7 All its precious idols will be smashed to pieces, everything given to its temple prostitutes will be destroyed by fire, and all its images will become a desolate heap. Samaria acquired these things for its fertility rites, and now her enemies will carry them off for temple prostitutes elsewhere."

Mic 1:8 Then Micah said, "Because of this I will mourn and lament. To show my sorrow, I will walk around barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and wail like an ostrich.

Mic 1:9 Samaria's wounds cannot be healed, and Judah is about to suffer in the same way; destruction has reached the gates of Jerusalem itself, where my people live."

Mic 1:10 Don't tell our enemies in Gath about our defeat; don't let them see you weeping. People of Beth Leaphrah, show your despair by rolling in the dust!

Mic 1:11 You people of Shaphir, go into exile, naked and ashamed. Those who live in Zaanen do not dare to come out of their city. When you hear the people of Bethel mourn, you will know that there is no refuge there.

Mic 1:12 The people of Moresheth Gath anxiously wait for relief, because the LORD has brought disaster close to Jerusalem.

Mic 1:13 You that live in Lachish, hitch the horses to the chariots. You imitated the sins of Israel and so caused Jerusalem to sin.

Mic 1:14 And now, people of Judah, say good-bye to the town of Moresheth Gath. The kings of Israel will get no help from the town of Achzib.

Mic 1:15 People of Mareshah, the LORD will hand you over to an enemy, who is going to capture your town. The leaders of Israel will go and hide in the cave at Adullam.

Mic 1:16 People of Judah, cut off your hair in mourning for the children you love. Make yourselves as bald as vultures, because your children will be taken away from you into exile.

Micah 1:1-16

Micah 1 – Coming Judgment on Israel and Judah

A. Coming judgment on Israel.

1. (1) Introduction to the prophecy of Micah.

The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

a. **Micah of Moresheth:** The city of **Moresheth** (also called *Moresheth Gath* in Mic 1:14) was about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southwest of Jerusalem on the border lands between Judah and the Philistines. This means that the prophet **Micah** was like the prophet Amos, a man from the country sent to the cities to bring **the word of the LORD**.

i. We really don't know anything about Micah's background or call, but we do know that he had a strong sense of his own calling as a prophet, and he said so in Mic 3:8.

b. **In the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah:** This means that Micah ministered as a prophet some time between the years 739 B.C. (the start of the reign of **Jotham**) and 686 B.C. (the end of the reign of **Hezekiah**). Since Hezekiah was a noted reformer, we can suppose that the sin Micah confronted mainly concerns the time before the important reforms of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20).

c. **Concerning Samaria and Jerusalem:** The city of **Samaria** was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and **Jerusalem** was the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah. Micah looked to both the northern and southern kingdoms in his prophecy.

i. In Judah during this time, King **Ahaz** was a particularly evil ruler. In Israel, there were a succession of evil kings.

2. (2-5) *The LORD comes to judge Israel and Judah.*

Hear, all you peoples!
Listen, O earth, and all that is in it!
Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you,
The Lord from His holy temple.
For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place;
He will come down
And tread on the high places of the earth.
The mountains will melt under Him,
And the valleys will split
Like wax before the fire,
Like waters poured down a steep place.
All this is for the transgression of Jacob
And for the sins of the house of Israel.
What *is* the transgression of Jacob?
***Is it* not Samaria?**
And what *are* the high places of Judah?
***Are they* not Jerusalem?**

a. **The LORD is coming out of His place:** With vivid images, Micah saw the LORD descending from heaven to earth, and coming with judgment. If the **mountains** and **valleys** could not stand before Him, what hope does sinful, rebellious man have?

b. **All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel:** This dramatic, powerful descent of the LORD was only because of the **sins of** His people.

i. It is easy to imagine that the people of Judah and Israel thought this was unfair. They looked around at the pagan nations surrounding them and saw that they were even more corrupt than themselves. Nevertheless, the principle stands: *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God (1Pe 4:17)*. However, we also do well to remember the second part of that verse: *And if it begins with us*

first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

3. (6-7) Samaria left desolate in judgment.

**“Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field,
Places for planting a vineyard;
I will pour down her stones into the valley,
And I will uncover her foundations.
All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces,
And all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire;
All her idols I will lay desolate,
For she gathered *it* from the pay of a harlot,
And they shall return to the pay of a harlot.”**

a. **I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field:** Micah prophesied the coming judgment on **Samaria**, the capital city of Israel, the kingdom of the ten northern tribes. This was fulfilled in 722 B.C. when Samaria fell to the Assyrians and was completely destroyed.

b. **All her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire:** Micah combined the ideas of idolatry and spiritual adultery. Money spent on idols and their worship would be brought to nothing when the mighty army of the Assyrians would destroy Samaria.

i. “Golden images, of such monetary value yet so spiritually and politically worthless, were constructed from the wages of cult prostitutes. The conquerors will break them up and use the money to repeat the same cycle. Only the heart of depraved man could worship gods like that!” (Waltke)

B. Coming judgment on Judah.

1. (8-9) The agony of announcing judgment on the nation of Judah.

**Therefore I will wail and howl,
I will go stripped and naked;
I will make a wailing like the jackals
And a mourning like the ostriches,
For her wounds *are* incurable.
For it has come to Judah;
It has come to the gate of my people—
To Jerusalem.**

a. **I will wail and howl:** Micah could not prophesy in a dispassionate, detached way. When he saw judgment coming upon his people, it made him **wail and howl** like **the jackals**.

i. Micah didn't just announce judgment and then yawn. He cared so deeply that he wept with God's people. The preacher's duty is more than to just announce judgment and to walk away. He has to *care*. "Many who have rejected a Christian's logic have been won by his tears" (Boice).

b. **For her wounds are incurable:** Our only **incurable** wounds are the ones we refuse to bring to God. With Him, all things are possible (Luk 18:27), but when we refuse to bring our sin to Him, then our **wounds are incurable**.

2. (10-16) The shame of Judah's judgment is evident among the nations.

**Tell *it* not in Gath,
Weep not at all;
In Beth Aphrah
Roll yourself in the dust.
Pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir;
The inhabitant of Zaanan does not go out.
Beth Ezel mourns;
Its place to stand is taken away from you.
For the inhabitant of Maroth pined for good,**

**But disaster came down from the LORD
To the gate of Jerusalem.
O inhabitant of Lachish,
Harness the chariot to the swift steeds
(She was the beginning of sin to the daughter of
Zion),
For the transgressions of Israel were found in you.
Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath;
The houses of Achzib *shall be* a lie to the kings of
Israel.
I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of
Mareshah;
The glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.
Make yourself bald and cut off your hair,
Because of your precious children;
Enlarge your baldness like an eagle,
For they shall go from you into captivity.**

a. **Tell it not in Gath:** The city of **Gath** belonged to the Philistines, and it hurt Micah to think that the Philistines would rejoice at the pain of God's people.

b. **In Beth Aphrah roll yourself in the dust:** Following to the end of the chapter, Micah used puns and plays on words to talk about the judgment coming upon the cities of Judah. These towns were clustered in the *Shephelah* – the lowlands between the coastal region and the mountains of Judah.

i. Though Micah used puns, this wasn't about clever word games – it went back to the ancient idea that a name wasn't just your name but that it described your *character* and your *destiny*, sometimes prophetically. In showing how the name of these cities was in some way a prophecy of their destiny, Micah showed how our character becomes our future.

c. **Beth Aphrah**: To Micah, **Aphrah** sounded like the Hebrew word for *dust*, so he told the citizens of **Beth Aphrah** to roll in the dust in anticipation of coming judgment.

d. **Shaphir**: The name of this town sounded like the word for *beautiful*. It wouldn't be beautiful for long, and Micah warned the citizens of **Shaphir** to prepare for judgment.

e. **Zaanan**: The name of this town sounded like the Hebrew word for *exit* or *go out*. When the enemy's siege armies would come, the Jewish people would not *exit* at all – they would be shut up in the city until they fell.

f. **Beth Ezel**: The name of this town means *the nearby city*. When the army of judgment comes, it won't be near and helpful to any other city.

g. **Maroth**: The name of this town means *bitterness*, and when the army of judgment comes, the citizens of **Maroth** will know plenty of bitterness.

h. **Lachish**: The name of this town sounded like the Hebrew word for *to the horses*. **Lachish** was an important fortress city, and they should go *to the horses* to fight, but ironically, they would go *to the horses* to flee the army of judgment.

i. **Moreseth**: The name of this – Micah's hometown – sounded like the Hebrew word for *betroted*. Here he spoke of giving the city wedding gifts as she passed from the rule of one "husband" (Judah) to another (the invading army).

j. **Aczib**: The name of this town sounds like the Hebrew word for *deceitful* or *disappointing*. This city would fall so quickly it would be a deception and a disappointment for Israel.

k. **Mareshah**: The name of this town is related to the Hebrew word for *possessor* or *heir*. The invading army would soon possess this city.

l. **Adullam**: This was the place of refuge for David when he fled from King Saul. It would again be a place of refuge for the high and mighty among Israel, when they would be forced to hide out in **Adullam**.

Woe to the Oppressors

Mic 2:1 How terrible it will be for those who lie awake and plan evil! When morning comes, as soon as they have the chance, they do the evil they planned.

Mic 2:2 When they want fields, they seize them; when they want houses, they take them. No one's family or property is safe.

Mic 2:3 And so the LORD says, "I am planning to bring disaster on you, and you will not be able to escape it. You are going to find yourselves in trouble, and then you will not walk so proudly any more.

Mic 2:4 When that time comes, people will use the story about you as an example of disaster, and they will sing this song of despair about your experience: We are completely ruined! The LORD has taken our land away And given it to those who took us captive."

Mic 2:5 So then, when the time comes for the land to be given back to the LORD's people, there will be no share for any of you.

Mic 2:6 The people preach at me and say, "Don't preach at us. Don't preach about all that. God is not going to disgrace us.

Mic 2:7 Do you think the people of Israel are under a curse? Has the LORD lost his patience? Would he really do such things? Doesn't he speak kindly to those who do right?"

Mic 2:8 The LORD replies, "You attack my people like enemies. Men return from battle, thinking they are safe at home, but there you are, waiting to steal the coats off their backs.

Mic 2:9 You drive the women of my people out of the homes they love, and you have robbed their children of my blessings forever.

Mic 2:10 Get up and go; there is no safety here any more. Your sins have doomed this place to destruction.

Mic 2:11 "These people want the kind of prophet who goes around full of lies and deceit and says, 'I prophesy that wine and liquor will flow for you.'

Mic 2:12 "But I will gather you together, all you people of Israel that are left. I will bring you together like sheep returning to the fold. Like a pasture full of sheep, your land will once again be filled with many people."

Mic 2:13 God will open the way for them and lead them out of exile. They will break out of the city gates and go free. Their king, the LORD himself, will lead them out.

Micah 2:1-13

Micah 2 – God's Sinful People

A. The sins of covetousness and pride.

1. (1-2) Covetousness among God's people.

**Woe to those who devise iniquity,
And work out evil on their beds!
At morning light they practice it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.
They covet fields and take *them* by violence,
Also houses, and seize *them*.
So they oppress a man and his house,
A man and his inheritance.**

a. **Woe to those who devise iniquity:** All sin is bad before God, but *premeditated* sin is worse. Here Micah spoke plainly to those who **devise iniquity** – in this case – those who oppress others through their greed and covetousness.

b. **At morning light they practice it:** This probably an ironic statement. Typically, thieves practice their work at night, under the cover of darkness. In the ancient world, law courts opened for business **at morning light** because the rising sun demonstrated light dispelling darkness. Micah saw the corruption of Israel's law courts and explained that they practiced their theft and evil **at morning light**, when the courts opened.

c. **Because it is in the power of their hand:** There are some sins we never commit because we are never put in a place where we *can* commit them. The real test comes when **it is in the power of our hand** to sin and we remain faithful to the LORD.

2. (3-5) *God's proud people brought low.*

Therefore thus says the LORD:

**"Behold, against this family I am devising disaster,
From which you cannot remove your necks;
Nor shall you walk haughtily,
For this *is* an evil time.**

**In that day *one* shall take up a proverb against you,
And lament with a bitter lamentation, saying:**

'We are utterly destroyed!

He has changed the heritage of my people;

How He has removed *it* from me!

To a turncoat He has divided our fields.'"

**Therefore you will have no one to determine
boundaries by lot in the assembly of the LORD.**

a. **Against this family I am devising disaster:** The people devised iniquity; God devised disaster upon them. In His justice, He gave to them what they gave to others.

b. **Nor shall you walk haughtily, for this is an evil time:** Micah rebuked the pride among God's people and announced that in the **evil time** to come – the time of judgment coming on God's people – they would be brought low and will no longer **walk haughtily**.

c. **To a turncoat He has divided our fields:** In the coming judgment – in particular, the judgment coming on Israel by the conquering Assyrian Empire – they would leave their land in the possession of strangers.

B. Though they sin against His Word, God promises restoration to His people.

1. (6-9) God's people reject the word of His prophets.

"Do not prattle," you say to those who prophesy.

So they shall not prophesy to you;

They shall not return insult for insult.

You who are named the house of Jacob:

"Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?

Are these His doings?

Do not My words do good

To him who walks uprightly?

Lately My people have risen up as an enemy;

You pull off the robe with the garment

From those who trust you, as they pass by,

Like men returned from war.

The women of My people you cast out

From their pleasant houses;

From their children

You have taken away My glory forever."

a. **Do not prattle:** When God's prophets came to His people, they didn't receive it. They disregarded God's Word as mere **prattle**. As a result, God stopped sending prophets (**so they shall not prophesy to you**). Fortunately, God's people responded to Micah's warning before God stopped sending him, but it took a while.

i. Micah began his ministry in the reign of Jotham, but nobody listened. Then he prophesied during the reign of Ahaz, but nobody listened. Finally, he prophesied during the reign of Hezekiah and the leaders and the people repented. Micah didn't give up, even though results were slow in coming. Micah preached for anywhere between 16 and 25 years before there was any response.

b. **Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted:** In their foolishness, the people of Israel thought that *God* was the problem. They needed to understand that there was no restriction on **the Spirit of the LORD**; instead *they* provided all the restriction.

i. "Do you not think, again, that we very much act as if the Spirit of the Lord were straitened *when we only look for little blessings*? I am very glad to see three hundred or four hundred persons in a year converted and added to this church, and this has long been the case; but if I ever imbibed the idea that this was all that might be done, I should be straitening the Spirit of God." (Spurgeon)

c. **Do not My words do good to him who walks uprightly:** The key to their preservation in the midst of judgment was to stick tightly to God's **words**. When they rejected God's **words**, they were left poor and destitute, both materially and spiritually.

2. (10-11) *God's people embrace false prophets.*

**"Arise and depart,
For this *is* not *your* rest;
Because it is defiled, it shall destroy,
Yes, with utter destruction.
If a man should walk in a false spirit
And speak a lie, *saying*,
'I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,'
Even he would be the prattler of this people.**

a. **This is not your rest:** Micah exposed the lies of false prophets showing that they could never really give **rest**. The words of false prophets are **defiled**, and bring **utter destruction** instead of the peace, rest, and restoration of God's Word.

b. **If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie:** With judgment looming on the horizon – especially for the northern kingdom of Israel – there were false prophets who spoke of days of **wine and drink**, giving false comfort and hope to a deceived people. These were the real "prattlers," not the true prophets of God, as they were falsely called by the ungodly in Micah's day (Mic 2:6). The only prophet they wanted was one to tell them there would be plenty of alcohol (**I will prophesy to you of wine and drink**).

3. (12-13) *A promise of restoration.*

**"I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob,
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will put them together like sheep of the fold,
Like a flock in the midst of their pasture;
They shall make a loud noise because of *so many* people.
The one who breaks open will come up before them;
They will break out,
Pass through the gate,
And go out by it;**

**Their king will pass before them,
With the LORD at their head."**

a. **I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob:** Though judgment was promised because of the great sin of God's people, they were still not beyond the grace and goodness of God. He still promised restoration to **the remnant of Israel**.

b. **They shall make a loud noise because of so many people:** The remnant will not be few; there would be **many people** brought back to the LORD and His ways – **with the LORD at their head**.

c. **The one who breaks open:** This can be translated as a title; the King James Version has it as *the Breaker*. We can see this as a more obscure, but no less precious messianic title of Jesus: *The Breaker*. In this office, He is the captain and leader of His people, advancing in front of His flock. We need a *Breaker*, a trailblazer for our life.

Rulers and Prophets Denounced

Mic 3:1 Listen, you rulers of Israel! You are supposed to be concerned about justice,

Mic 3:2 yet you hate what is good and you love what is evil. You skin my people alive and tear the flesh off their bones.

Mic 3:3 You eat my people up. You strip off their skin, break their bones, and chop them up like meat for the pot.

Mic 3:4 The time is coming when you will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer you. He will not listen to your prayers, for you have done evil.

Mic 3:5 My people are deceived by prophets who promise peace to those who pay them, but threaten war for those who don't. To these prophets the LORD says,

Mic 3:6 "Prophets, your day is almost over; the sun is going down on you. Because you mislead my people, you will have

no more prophetic visions, and you will not be able to predict anything."

Mic 3:7 Those who predict the future will be disgraced by their failure. They will all be humiliated because God does not answer them.

Mic 3:8 But as for me, the LORD fills me with his spirit and power, and gives me a sense of justice and the courage to tell the people of Israel what their sins are.

Mic 3:9 Listen to me, you rulers of Israel, you that hate justice and turn right into wrong.

Mic 3:10 You are building God's city, Jerusalem, on a foundation of murder and injustice.

Mic 3:11 The city's rulers govern for bribes, the priests interpret the Law for pay, the prophets give their revelations for money—and they all claim that the LORD is with them. "No harm will come to us," they say. "The LORD is with us."

Mic 3:12 And so, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a pile of ruins, and the Temple hill will become a forest.

Micah 3:1-12

Micah 3 – Against Princes and Prophets

A. God against the princes of His people.

1. (1-3) The violence of leaders against God's people.

And I said:

**"Hear now, O heads of Jacob,
And you rulers of the house of Israel:
Is it not for you to know justice?
You who hate good and love evil;
Who strip the skin from My people,
And the flesh from their bones;
Who also eat the flesh of My people,**

**Flay their skin from them,
Break their bones,
And chop *them* in pieces
Like *meat* for the pot,
Like flesh in the caldron."**

a. **Hear now, O heads of Jacob:** Previously, Micah addressed his comments to God's people in general. Now he specifically spoke to their leaders, because they had both a special responsibility and accountability before God.

b. **You who hate good and love evil:** If this description wasn't bad enough, Micah went on to illustrate how terribly the leaders of Israel and Judah used the people – as if they were cannibals feasting on the people of God (**who also eat the flesh of My people**).

i. "Since the grinding poverty of the poor was leading them into an early grave, the prophet, in a sustained metaphor, depicts the magistrates responsible for creating these conditions as acting like cannibals. This grotesque figure aims to awaken the conscience of the reprobates." (Waltke)

ii. This reminds us the people never exist for the sake of the leaders, but leaders are there for the sake of the people. A leader should never serve God's people dominated by the question, "What is in it for me?" When they do, they are like the cannibalistic leaders described by Micah.

2. (4) God's judgment of silence against corrupt leaders.

**Then they will cry to the LORD,
But He will not hear them;
He will even hide His face from them at that time,
Because they have been evil in their deeds.**

a. **Then they will cry to the LORD, but He will not hear them:** This was one example of God's judgment against the corrupt leaders. When they cried out for God's help, the LORD would remain silent.

b. **He will even hide His face from them at that time:** One aspect of the blessing pronounced by the priests of Israel was asked the LORD to *make His face shine upon you* (Num 6:25). Here, Micah promised the opposite of this blessing – that God would **even hide His face from them at that time**.

B. God against the false prophets to His people.

1. (5-7) *The sin and promised judgment of false prophets.*

Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets

Who make my people stray;

Who chant "Peace"

While they chew with their teeth,

But who prepare war against him

Who puts nothing into their mouths:

"Therefore you shall have night without vision,

And you shall have darkness without divination;

The sun shall go down on the prophets,

And the day shall be dark for them.

So the seers shall be ashamed,

And the diviners abashed;

Indeed they shall all cover their lips;

For *there is* no answer from God."

a. **The prophets who make my people stray:** Micah returned to a theme first mentioned in Mic 2:11, speaking of the false **prophets** who brought hollow comfort and pretend peace to God's people.

b. **The sun shall go down on the prophets:** Through Micah, God announced that He would bring the false prophets into complete confusion and disrepute. They

would have **no answer from God** and therefore they **shall be ashamed**.

2. (8) *Micah's confidence as a true prophet of God.*

**But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD,
And of justice and might,
To declare to Jacob his transgression
And to Israel his sin.**

a. **I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD:** In contrast to the coming shame of the false prophets, Micah had a justified confidence in the LORD who called Him as a prophet. Because he knew God and was close to God and His word, Micah knew that he was **full of power by the Spirit of the LORD**.

i. Micah also knew that the **power** came **by the Spirit of the LORD**, not by anything in Micah. The power also came from **justice and might** because Micah knew he was on the side of God's word and God's strength.

ii. "We must have the Holy Spirit, and if we have him not, all our machinery will stand still; or if it goes on, it will produce no effect whatever. I heard of a Christian man whose mill-wheel was noticed to be in motion on a certain Sunday. The people going to worship greatly wondered there at; but one who went by set their minds at rest by pointing out that the wheel was only turning idly round, because the water, by accident, was allowed to flow over it. But the man said, 'It is very like our minister and his sermons. There is no work being done, but the wheel goes round, clickety click, clickety click, though it is not grinding anything.' Therein it also greatly resembles many an organization for spiritual service: the water is passing over it, glittering as it flows; but the outside motion does not join on to any human need, nor

produce any practical result, and nothing comes of the click and hum.” (Spurgeon)

b. **To declare to Jacob his transgression:** Like most prophets in the Old Testament, Micah’s job was to expose the sin of God’s people.

i. We might say that under the New Covenant, prophets have a somewhat different calling. Under the Old Covenant, the law was not written on the heart of the believer and the Holy Spirit did not indwell each believer in the same way as under the New Covenant.

ii. Therefore, there was a greater need for the convicting work of the Spirit of God coming from the “outside,” from prophets such as Micah. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul described the ministry of the prophet like this: *But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men* (1Co 14:3). This certainly doesn’t mean that under the New Covenant prophecy will never be used to expose sin, but it certainly isn’t its central purpose.

3. (9-12) *Unrepentant Jerusalem will share Samaria’s fate of destruction.*

**Now hear this,
You heads of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who abhor justice
And pervert all equity,
Who build up Zion with bloodshed
And Jerusalem with iniquity:
Her heads judge for a bribe,
Her priests teach for pay,
And her prophets divine for money.
Yet they lean on the LORD, and say,
“Is not the LORD among us?**

**No harm can come upon us.”
Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.**

a. **Now hear this... who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity:** In this chapter, Micah first spoke to the judges, then to the prophets. Now he spoke to the princes, **you heads of the house of Jacob**. The rulers of Jerusalem were not much better than the rulers of Israel and could expect similar judgment unless they repented.

b. **Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, “Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us”:** The leaders of Jerusalem had a false confidence in religious ritual and form. All the while, judgment was appointed for Jerusalem unless they repented.

i. The great thing about the Prophet Micah was that he was listened to. Hosea was ignored, and so was Amos. They threw Jeremiah in jail for his prophetic message of coming judgment. In contrast, King Hezekiah and the leadership of Judah listened to the Prophet Micah.

ii. Jer 26:17-19 describes how even a hundred years later the impact of Micah was remembered: *Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.”’ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah*

ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the Lord's favor? And the Lord relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves."

iii. "He was heard in the days of Hezekiah. A revival followed. Then, one hundred years later, his words were still remembered, and the memory of what happened earlier was used of God to spare the life of Jeremiah." (Boice)

The Mountain of the Lord

Mic 4:1 In days to come the mountain where the Temple stands will be the highest one of all, towering above all the hills. Many nations will come streaming to it,

Mic 4:2 and their people will say, "Let us go up the hill of the LORD, to the Temple of Israel's God. He will teach us what he wants us to do; we will walk in the paths he has chosen. For the LORD's teaching comes from Jerusalem; from Zion he speaks to his people."

Mic 4:3 He will settle disputes among the nations, among the great powers near and far. They will hammer their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again.

Mic 4:4 Everyone will live in peace among their own vineyards and fig trees, and no one will make them afraid. The LORD Almighty has promised this.

Mic 4:5 Each nation worships and obeys its own god, but we will worship and obey the LORD our God forever and ever.

The Lord Shall Rescue Zion

Mic 4:6 "The time is coming," says the LORD, "when I will gather together the people I punished, those who have

suffered in exile.

Mic 4:7 They are crippled and far from home, but I will make a new beginning with those who are left, and they will become a great nation. I will rule over them on Mount Zion from that time on and forever."

Mic 4:8 And you, Jerusalem, where God, like a shepherd from his lookout tower, watches over his people, will once again be the capital of the kingdom that was yours.

Mic 4:9 Why do you cry out so loudly? Why are you suffering like a woman in labor? Is it because you have no king, and your counselors are dead?

Mic 4:10 Twist and groan, people of Jerusalem, like a woman giving birth, for now you will have to leave the city and live in the open country. You will have to go to Babylon, but there the LORD will save you from your enemies.

Mic 4:11 Many nations have gathered to attack you. They say, "Jerusalem must be destroyed! We will see this city in ruins!"

Mic 4:12 But these nations do not know what is in the LORD's mind. They do not realize that they have been gathered together to be punished in the same way that grain is brought in to be threshed.

Mic 4:13 The LORD says, "People of Jerusalem, go and punish your enemies! I will make you as strong as a bull with iron horns and bronze hoofs. You will crush many nations, and the wealth they got by violence you will present to me, the Lord of the whole world."

Micah 4:1-13

Micah 4 – The LORD Reigns over Restored Zion

A. The character of restored Zion.

1. (1-3) Zion is the center of a renewed earth.

**Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.
Many nations shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between many peoples,
And rebuke strong nations afar off;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.**

a. The mountain of the LORD's house... shall be exalted above the hills: This speaks of the ultimate exaltation of Jerusalem, the City of Zion, in the LORD's ultimate restoration. This will be fulfilled completely in the Millennium, when **the peoples shall flow to** a restored and redeemed Jerusalem as the capital of the millennial earth (**out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem**).

i. Mic 4:1-3 is repeated in Isa 2:1-3. Since Isaiah and Micah were contemporary prophets, it isn't surprising that the same Spirit of the LORD could give these two prophets the same word, to establish and emphasize His word.

ii. The glorious transformation of the mountain of the Lord is especially wonderful in light of what the sinning people of God did to it: *Therefore because of*

you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest (Mic 3:12).

b. **He will teach us His ways:** With the prophet's eye Micah saw the world streaming into Jerusalem to meet with the Lord GOD, and to know Him better.

c. **He shall judge between many peoples:** During the reign of the Messiah, there will be no more war. There will still be conflicts between nations and individuals, but they will be justly and decisively resolved by the Messiah and those who reign with Him (**He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people**).

i. It isn't the reign of the Messiah itself that will change the heart of man. Citizens of earth will still need to trust in Jesus and His work on their behalf for their personal salvation during the millennium. But war and armed conflict will not be tolerated.

d. **Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore:** It is important to see that this is not the peace of capitulation. This is the peace of enforced righteousness. There will be no more war, and no more need for **swords** – so it makes sense to them into **plowshares**. There will be no more war because there will be a new ruler on earth, Jesus Christ.

i. Psa 2:9 tells us what the Messiah will do to the disobedient in that day: *You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.*

ii. We long for the day when there is no more need for a military budget, when the money that goes for weapons and armies can go to schools and parks. But

we are only safe doing that when the Messiah reigns among us!

e. **It shall come to pass in the latter days:** In 1941 Franklin Roosevelt gave a famous speech about four freedoms: freedom of *speech*, freedom of *religion*, freedom from *want*, and freedom from *fear*. Mic 4:1-5 describes four freedoms:

- Freedom from *ignorance* (**He will teach us His ways**).
- Freedom from *war* (**Neither shall they learn war anymore**).
- Freedom from *want* (**everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree**).
- Freedom from *fear* (**no one shall make them afraid**).

2. (4-5) *The blessed people of restored Zion.*

But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,

And no one shall make *them* afraid;

For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

For all people walk each in the name of his god,

But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God

Forever and ever.

a. **Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree:** This is a proverbial expression that means prosperity and peace (1Ki 4:25, 2Ki 18:31).

b. **We will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever:** In the Millennial reign, the inhabitants of earth will not be compelled to follow the LORD. Some will **walk each in the name of his god**; yet those who do **walk in the name of the LORD** will enjoy great blessing and peace.

3. (6-8) *The gathering of restored Zion.*

**"In that day," says the LORD,
"I will assemble the lame,
I will gather the outcast
And those whom I have afflicted;
I will make the lame a remnant,
And the outcast a strong nation;
So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on, even forever.
And you, O tower of the flock,
The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,
To you shall it come,
Even the former dominion shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."**

a. **I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation:** God's restoration will not be just for the strong, but also for the weak and disadvantaged. They will especially know the blessing of His restoration.

b. **To you shall it come:** These promises are so glorious that it would be easy for Israel to think they were too good to be true. Therefore, God gave them a special promise, vowing **to you it shall come**.

B. The birth of restored Zion.

1. (9-10) The pain before Zion's restoration.

**Now why do you cry aloud?
Is there no king in your midst?
Has your counselor perished?
For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.
Be in pain, and labor to bring forth,
O daughter of Zion,
Like a woman in birth pangs.
For now you shall go forth from the city,
You shall dwell in the field,
And to Babylon you shall go.
here you shall be delivered;**

**There the LORD will redeem you
From the hand of your enemies.**

a. **Pangs have seized you like a woman in labor:** After describing the glory of restored Zion, now Micah told them of some of the pain they would experience before it comes. Part of the pain would be a lack of leadership (**no king in your midst... counselor perished**).

b. **To Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered:** As is common in the prophets, Micah combined promises fulfilled in different eras of God's work. Having just spoken of the Millennial Earth, now he spoke of Israel's deliverance from Babylonian captivity.

2. (11-13) The strength of restored Zion among the nations.

**Now also many nations have gathered against you,
Who say, "Let her be defiled,
And let our eye look upon Zion."
But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD,
Nor do they understand His counsel;
For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing
floor.**

**"Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion;
For I will make your horn iron,
And I will make your hooves bronze;
You shall beat in pieces many peoples;
I will consecrate their gain to the LORD,
And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth."**

a. **Many nations have gathered against you:** Though the nations were set against Israel, the LORD was for them (**they do not understand the thoughts of the LORD**). The LORD will deal with Israel's enemies as easily as a farmer deals with the **sheaves** of grain on the **threshing floor**.

b. **I will make your horn iron:** When the LORD restores Zion, He will restore them in strength – as strong as an ox with an **iron** horn. This has its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennium when Israel will be lifted up as a superpower among the nations.

i. “The ox pulling the threshing-sledge represents the people of God. She is supernaturally equipped with *horns of iron*, symbolizing her invincibility, and with *hoofs of bronze*, with which she treads the pride and pretensions of the enemy exceedingly fine.” (Waltke)

The Ruler to Be Born in Bethlehem

Mic 5:1 People of Jerusalem, gather your forces! We are besieged! They are attacking the leader of Israel!

Mic 5:2 The LORD says, "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times."

Mic 5:3 So the LORD will abandon his people to their enemies until the woman who is to give birth has her son. Then those Israelites who are in exile will be reunited with their own people.

Mic 5:4 When he comes, he will rule his people with the strength that comes from the LORD and with the majesty of the LORD God himself. His people will live in safety because people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness,

Mic 5:5 and he will bring peace. When the Assyrians invade our country and break through our defenses, we will send our strongest leaders to fight them.

Mic 5:6 By force of arms they will conquer Assyria, the land of Nimrod, and they will save us from the Assyrians when they invade our territory.

A Remnant Shall Be Delivered

Mic 5:7 The people of Israel who survive will be like refreshing dew sent by the LORD for many nations, like showers on growing plants. They will depend on God, not people.

Mic 5:8 Those who are left among the nations will be like a lion hunting for food in a forest or a pasture: it gets in among the sheep, pounces on them, and tears them to pieces—and there is no hope of rescue.

Mic 5:9 Israel will conquer her enemies and destroy them all.

Mic 5:10 The LORD says, "At that time I will take away your horses and destroy your chariots.

Mic 5:11 I will destroy the cities in your land and tear down all your defenses.

Mic 5:12 I will destroy the magic charms you use and leave you without any fortunetellers.

Mic 5:13 I will destroy your idols and sacred stone pillars; no longer will you worship the things that you yourselves have made.

Mic 5:14 I will pull down the images of the goddess Asherah in your land and destroy your cities.

Mic 5:15 And in my great anger I will take revenge on all nations that have not obeyed me."

Micah 5:1-15

Micah 5 – A Ruler from Bethlehem

A. The birth and the work of the Ruler from Bethlehem.

1. (1-2) From the lowly and humble in Israel comes a Ruler.

Now gather yourself in troops,

O daughter of troops;

He has laid siege against us;

They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the

cheek.

**“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,
From everlasting.”**

a. **He has laid siege against us:** Micah announced that Israel will be humbled by foreign powers, and even her judges will bear insults.

b. **But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah... out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel:** In the coming time of humiliation under foreign powers, God would raise up a great **Ruler** from a humble place – **Bethlehem**.

i. **Bethlehem** was well known as the hometown of David, Israel’s greatest king; yet it was never a great or influential city. It was truly **little among the thousands of Israel**. Yet God chose it as the birthplace of the Messiah, the **Ruler in Israel**.

ii. This passage from Micah 5 was quoted by the chief priests and teachers of the law when Herod asked about the birth of the Messiah (Mat 2:5-6).

iii. **Bethlehem** means *House of Bread*, and Jesus is the Bread of Life (Joh 6:35). “And now for that word *Ephratah*. That was the old name of the place which the Jews retained and loved. The meaning of it is, ‘fruitfulness,’ or ‘abundance.’ Ah! well was Jesus born in the house of fruitfulness; for whence cometh my fruitfulness and thy fruitfulness, my brother, but from Bethlehem? Our poor barren hearts never produced one fruit or flower, till they were watered with the Savior’s blood” (Spurgeon).

c. **Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting:** This glorious promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and Micah's prophetic voice declared that though Jesus came from Bethlehem, He did not *begin* there. His **goings forth** are from eternity past.

i. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (Rev 22:13). This means from the very beginning, Jesus was there. There was never a time when the Jesus did not exist.

ii. Before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He existed as the *Second Person of the Trinity* (Joh 17:5; Joh 17:24). These passages tell us that there was a relationship of love, fellowship, and shared glory that the Father and the Son shared in eternity past. The name "Jesus" was not known as a name for the Second Person of the Trinity until the angel Gabriel announced it to Mary (Luk 1:31). But the eternal Son existed before He revealed Himself as "Jesus."

iii. Before Bethlehem, Jesus was the creator of all things (Col 1:16-17, Joh 1:1-3). "He was *before* all things. As he is the *Creator* of all things, so he is the *Eternal*, and *no part* of what was created. All *being* but God has been *created*. Whatever has *not been created* is God. But Jesus is the *Creator* of all things; therefore he is God; for he cannot be a *part* of his *own work*" (Clarke).

iv. In the Old Testament, Jesus appeared as God made visible or The Angel of the LORD. There are many instances in the Old Testament where individuals are shown to have had a face to face encounter with the LORD (Gen 16:7-13, Genesis 18, Gen 32:24-32, Jos 5:13-15, Jdg 6:11-24, Jdg 13:8-24, Daniel 3). In each situation, the Person is given different titles, but in all cases the person is

plainly referred to as the LORD Himself but appearing in a human form.

v. From eternity past, God's plan of the ages included Jesus (1Pe 1:20, Eph 1:4).

vi. Knowing that Jesus' **goings forth are from of old, from everlasting** shows us some important things:

- It shows us the glory of Jesus, that He is far more than a man.
- It shows us the love of Jesus, that He would leave the glory of heaven for us.
- It shows us the nature of Jesus, that He would add humanity to His deity.
- It shows us the sympathy of Jesus, that He remains fully man and fully God.

2. (3-5a) The Ruler serves His flock.

**Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth;
Then the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.
And He shall stand and feed *His flock*
In the strength of the LORD,
In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God;
And they shall abide,
For now He shall be great
To the ends of the earth;
And this *One* shall be peace.**

a. **He shall give them up, until the time:** Micah anticipated a future time, one that was partially fulfilled in the Babylonian exile and return, but will be ultimately fulfilled in the Great Tribulation and restoration of Israel.

In both those eras, when the LORD will seem distant from Israel **until the time** for restoration is ready.

b. **Then the remnant of His brethren shall return... He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the LORD:** After the time of Israel's trial the LORD will restore gloriously. The *Ruler* born in Bethlehem will tenderly care for **His flock in the strength of the LORD.**

c. **They shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth:** The greatness of the *Ruler* from Bethlehem becomes the standing of His people. They **abide** because of His greatness.

d. **This One shall be peace:** It isn't just that the *Ruler* from Bethlehem *brings peace*; He *is peace*. As Paul wrote of Jesus in Eph 2:14, *He is our peace*.

3. (5b-6) *The Ruler delivers Jacob from Assyria.*

**When the Assyrian comes into our land,
And when he treads in our palaces,
Then we will raise against him
Seven shepherds and eight princely men.
They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria,
And the land of Nimrod at its entrances;
Thus He shall deliver *us* from the Assyrian,
When he comes into our land
And when he treads within our borders.**

a. **When the Assyrian comes into our land:** After the pattern of the prophets, Micah blended near and distant ages in his prophecy. The threat of the **Assyrian** would come against both kingdoms shortly, but Micah also used the *idea* of the **Assyrian** for any pagan nation or empire set itself against God's people.

b. **We will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princely men:** Though the enemies of God's

people would come against them, under God's blessing leaders will **raise against** them. God often works this way to **deliver us** from our enemies.

B. The triumph of the remnant of Jacob.

1. (7-9) The remnant is large and triumphant.

**Then the remnant of Jacob
Shall be in the midst of many peoples,
Like dew from the LORD,
Like showers on the grass,
That tarry for no man
Nor wait for the sons of men.
And the remnant of Jacob
Shall be among the Gentiles,
In the midst of many peoples,
Like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
Like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
Who, if he passes through,
Both treads down and tears in pieces,
And none can deliver.
Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries,
And all your enemies shall be cut off.**

a. **The remnant of Jacob shall be... like dew from the LORD:** When God delivers Zion it won't be a small deliverance. It will spread as wide as the **dew** and **showers on the grass**.

b. **Like a young lion among flocks of sheep:** When God delivers Zion, it won't be a weak deliverance. It will strengthen Israel so that she will triumph over her enemies like a **lion** against **sheep**. This has its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennial Earth, when it is said that the lion will lie down with the lamb – but still, it's better to be the lion!

2. (10-15) The LORD is exalted among the remnant.

**“And it shall be in that day,” says the LORD,
“That I will cut off your horses from your midst
And destroy your chariots.
I will cut off the cities of your land
And throw down all your strongholds.
I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
And you shall have no soothsayers.
Your carved images I will also cut off,
And your sacred pillars from your midst;
You shall no more worship the work of your hands;
I will pluck your wooden images from your midst;
Thus I will destroy your cities.
And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury
On the nations that have not heard.”**

a. **I will cut off your horses... the cities of your land... your strongholds... your sorceries... your carved images... your sacred pillars:** In restored Zion, the LORD will not allow any of the idolatries Israel once indulged in. Instead, He will **cut off** all of those things, whether they are basically good (**horses** or **cities**) or intrinsically evil (**sorceries... sacred pillars**).

b. **I will execute vengeance... on the nations that have not heard:** God will not only look after Israel’s purity; in the Millennial Earth **the nations** will also need to walk in purity before Him.

The Indictment of the Lord

Mic 6:1 Listen to the LORD's case against Israel. Arise, O LORD, and present your case; let the mountains and the hills hear what you say.

Mic 6:2 You mountains, you everlasting foundations of the earth, listen to the LORD's case! The LORD has a case against his people. He is going to bring an accusation against Israel.

Mic 6:3 The LORD says, "My people, what have I done to you? How have I been a burden to you? Answer me.

Mic 6:4 I brought you out of Egypt; I rescued you from slavery; I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead you.

Mic 6:5 My people, remember what King Balak of Moab planned to do to you and how Balaam son of Beor answered him. Remember the things that happened on the way from the camp at Acacia to Gilgal. Remember these things and you will realize what I did in order to save you."

What Does the Lord Require?

Mic 6:6 What shall I bring to the LORD, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him?

Mic 6:7 Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my first-born child to pay for my sins?

Mic 6:8 No, the LORD has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.

Destruction of the Wicked

Mic 6:9 It is wise to fear the LORD. He calls to the city, "Listen, you people who assemble in the city!

Mic 6:10 In the houses of evil people are treasures which they got dishonestly. They use false measures, a thing that I hate.

Mic 6:11 How can I forgive those who use false scales and weights?

Mic 6:12 Your rich people exploit the poor, and all of you are liars.

Mic 6:13 So I have already begun your ruin and destruction because of your sins.

Mic 6:14 You will eat, but not be satisfied—in fact you will still be hungry. You will carry things off, but you will not be

able to save them; anything you do save I will destroy in war.

Mic 6:15 You will sow grain, but not harvest the crop. You will press oil from olives, but never get to use it. You will make wine, but never drink it.

Mic 6:16 This will happen because you have followed the evil practices of King Omri and of his son, King Ahab. You have continued their policies, and so I will bring you to ruin, and everyone will despise you. People everywhere will treat you with contempt."

Micah 6:1-16

Micah 6 – In the Court of the LORD

A. The LORD's complaint against His people.

1. (1-2) In court with the LORD.

Hear now what the LORD says:

"Arise, plead your case before the mountains,

And let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, O you mountains, the LORD's complaint,

And you strong foundations of the earth;

For the LORD has a complaint against His people,

And He will contend with Israel.

a. **Arise, plead your case:** Micah pictured a court of law, with Israel on trial before the LORD. In the presence of unshakable witnesses (**the mountains** and **the hills** and the **strong foundations of the earth**), the court comes to order.

b. **The LORD has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel:** In His court, God will bring His case – His **complaint** against Israel.

2. (3-5) The LORD's complaint against His people.

**"O My people, what have I done to you?
And how have I wearied you?
Testify against Me.
For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
I redeemed you from the house of bondage;
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
O My people, remember now
What Balak king of Moab counseled
And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,
From Acacia Grove to Gilgal,
That you may know the righteousness of the LORD."**

a. **Testify against Me:** As Israel stepped to the witness stand, God asked them, **"What have I done to you?"** He had done nothing but good to Israel, and had been repaid with rejection and rebellion.

b. **I redeemed you from the house of bondage:** Not only did God *not* do evil to Israel, He also did them an enormous amount of *good*. He **redeemed** them and gave them godly leaders. God's case against Israel was strong and Israel was guilty in the prophet's court.

c. **Remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled:** Numbers 22-24 tells the story of **Balak** and **Balaam**. After meeting with King Balak of Moab, Balaam prophesied over Israel four times. As he spoke forth God's word, he did not curse Israel – but he blessed them each time. When he was unsuccessful in cursing Israel, Balaam **answered** Balak on how to bring Israel under a curse. Instead of trying to have a prophet curse them, the Moabites would lead them into fornication and idolatry, and thus God would curse idolatrous and disobedient Israel. Balak did just that, sending his young women into the camp of Israel to lead Israel into sexual immorality and idolatry. Because of their sin, God did

curse Israel – He brought a plague of judgment upon Israel that killed 24,000.

i. In light of this, Israel must **remember** that God could never be persuaded to curse Israel, except if they brought curses on themselves through their own idolatry and disobedience. In the prophet's courtroom God showed Israel that if they felt cursed in any way, it was entirely their responsibility.

3. (6-7) *The answer of His people: "What can I do?"*

**With what shall I come before the LORD,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?**

a. **With what shall I come before the LORD:** This was a question asked out of bitterness and resentment. In Micah's imagined courtroom, Israel called out to God from the witness stand, and said: "Just what do You want from me?"

b. **Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil:** We can almost hear Israel shouting at God from the witness stand. "You ask too much, God. Nothing will satisfy You. If we brought **thousands of rams** or **rivers of oil** or even my own **firstborn** it would not be enough to please You. You are unreasonable."

i. "Blinded to God's goodness and character, he reasons within his own depraved frame of reference. He need not change; God must change... His willingness to raise the price does not reflect his

generosity but veils a complaint that God demands too much." (Waltke)

4. (8) *The reply of the LORD: "He has shown you."*

**He has shown you, O man, what *is* good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?**

a. **He has shown you:** In Micah the prophet's imagined courtroom God stopped the shouting of the angry defendant from the witness box. God essentially said, "You act as if it is some mystery what I require of you. In point of fact it is no mystery at all. I have **shown you** clearly **what is good** and what I **require of you**."

b. **To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God:** The LORD answered the contentious witness in open court. "What I require of you isn't complicated. Simply do three things."

- **Do justly:** "Act in a just, fair way towards others. Treat them as you would want to be treated."

- **Love mercy:** "Don't just show mercy, but **love** to show it. Give others the same measure of mercy you want to receive from the Me."

- **Walk humbly with your God:** "Remember who I am – *your God*. If you keep that in mind, you will *walk humbly* before Me."

i. "I would not advise any of you to try to be humble, but to be humble. As to acting humbly, when a man forces himself to it, that is poor stuff. When a man talks a great deal about his humility, when he is very humble to everybody, he is generally a canting hypocrite. Humility must be in the heart, and then it

will come out spontaneously as the outflow of life in every act that a man performs.” (Spurgeon)

ii. Spurgeon’s sermon *Micah’s Message for Today* applied the idea of how to **walk humbly with your God**:

- Walk humbly when you are spiritually strong.
- Walk humbly when you have much work to do.
- Walk humbly in all your motives.
- Walk humbly studying God’s word.
- Walk humbly when under trials.
- Walk humbly in your devotions.
- Walk humbly between you and your brothers in Christ.
- Walk humbly when dealing with sinners.

iii. “True humility is thinking rightly of thyself, not meanly. When you have found out what you really are, you will be humble, for you are nothing to boast of. To be humble will make you safe. To be humble will make you happy. To be humble will make music in your heart when you go to bed. To be humble here will make you wake up in the likeness of your Master by-and-by.” (Spurgeon)

c. **He has shown you**: In Micah the prophet’s imagined courtroom God has proven His case before the court. Israel was afflicted, but it was not because of the neglect or disregard of God. Their own sin brought their affliction upon them. In addition, what God required of them was not mysterious or too difficult – they simply did not do it.

B. The voice of the LORD cries out in the city.

1. (9-12) *God sees the injustice and deceit of Israel.*

**The LORD's voice cries to the city–
Wisdom shall see Your name:
“Hear the Rod!
Who has appointed it?
Are there yet the treasures of wickedness
In the house of the wicked,
And the short measure *that is* an abomination?
Shall I count pure *those* with the wicked scales,
And with the bag of deceitful weights?
For her rich men are full of violence,
Her inhabitants have spoken lies,
And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.”**

a. **Hear the Rod! Who has appointed it?** Israel *felt* the rod of God, but they did not **hear** it. God tells them to **Hear the Rod**, both in the sense of the *rod* as a picture of the corrective discipline of God, and in the sense that **the Rod** can be personified as the voice of God Himself.

i. “We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities; and anyone who has watched gluttons shoveling down the most exquisite foods as if they did not know what they were eating, will admit that we can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists on being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”
(C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*)

b. **The short measure that is an abomination... wicked scales... deceitful weights:** God was angry with Israel for cheating in their business dealings. They lied and stole and cheated one another, all for the sake of making some money off each other.

c. **Her rich men are full of violence:** The sin of Israel went further than just cheating others in business and

commerce; they also made themselves rich through plain **violence**. They could expect the judgment of God for such sin.

i. "No society is ever entirely upright or godly; there are always evil people in it. But in a well-functioning society the evil are suppressed and those of good character are prominent and rule the land. In times of moral breakdown this is inverted." (Boice)

2. (13-16) *God's judgment on greedy and wicked Israel.*

**"Therefore I will also make *you* sick by striking you,
By making *you* desolate because of your sins.**

You shall eat, but not be satisfied;

Hunger *shall be* in your midst.

You may carry *some* away, but shall not save *them*;

And what you do rescue I will give over to the sword.

You shall sow, but not reap;

You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;

And *make* sweet wine, but not drink wine.

For the statutes of Omri are kept;

All the works of Ahab's house *are done*;

And you walk in their counsels,

That I may make you a desolation,

And your inhabitants a hissing.

Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people."

a. **You shall eat, but not be satisfied... what you do rescue I will give over to the sword:** God promised a tragic end for their ill-gotten gains. He would allow them no satisfaction or blessing in what they possessed.

b. **All the works of Ahab's house are done; and you walk in their counsels:** Instead of walking in the ways of the LORD, they walked in the sinful example of wicked kings before them, and in the **counsels** of the ungodly.

i. "Omri, king of Israel, the father of Ahab, was one of the worst kings the Israelites ever had; and Ahab followed in his wicked father's steps. The *statutes* of those kings were the very grossest *idolatry*." (Clarke)

Wait for the God of Salvation

Mic 7:1 It's hopeless! I am like a hungry person who finds no fruit left on the trees and no grapes on the vines. All the grapes and all the tasty figs have been picked.

Mic 7:2 There is not an honest person left in the land, no one loyal to God. Everyone is waiting for a chance to commit murder. Everyone hunts down their own people.

Mic 7:3 They are all experts at doing evil. Officials and judges ask for bribes. The influential people tell them what they want, and so they scheme together.

Mic 7:4 Even the best and most honest of them are as worthless as weeds. The day has come when God will punish the people, as he warned them through their watchmen, the prophets. Now they are in confusion.

Mic 7:5 Don't believe your neighbor or trust your friend. Be careful what you say even to your husband or wife.

Mic 7:6 In these times sons treat their fathers like fools, daughters oppose their mothers, and young women quarrel with their mothers-in-law; your enemies are the members of your own family.

Mic 7:7 But I will watch for the LORD; I will wait confidently for God, who will save me. My God will hear me.

Mic 7:8 Our enemies have no reason to gloat over us. We have fallen, but we will rise again. We are in darkness now, but the LORD will give us light.

Mic 7:9 We have sinned against the LORD, so now we must endure his anger for a while. But in the end he will defend us and right the wrongs that have been done to us. He will bring us out to the light; we will live to see him save us.

Mic 7:10 Then our enemies will see this and be disgraced—the same enemies who taunted us by asking, "Where is the LORD your God?" We will see them defeated, trampled down like mud in the streets.

Mic 7:11 People of Jerusalem, the time to rebuild the city walls is coming. At that time your territory will be enlarged.

Mic 7:12 Your people will return to you from everywhere—from Assyria in the east, from Egypt in the south, from the region of the Euphrates River, from distant seas and far-off mountains.

Mic 7:13 But the earth will become a desert because of the wickedness of those who live on it.

Mic 7:14 Be a shepherd to your people, LORD, the people you have chosen. Although they live apart in the wilderness, there is fertile land around them. Let them go and feed in the rich pastures of Bashan and Gilead, as they did long ago.

Mic 7:15 Work miracles for us, LORD, as you did in the days when you brought us out of Egypt.

Mic 7:16 The nations will see this and be frustrated in spite of all their strength. In dismay they will close their mouths and cover their ears.

Mic 7:17 They will crawl in the dust like snakes; they will come from their fortresses, trembling and afraid. They will turn in fear to the LORD our God.

God's Steadfast Love and Compassion

Mic 7:18 There is no other god like you, O LORD; you forgive the sins of your people who have survived. You do not stay angry forever, but you take pleasure in showing us your constant love.

Mic 7:19 You will be merciful to us once again. You will trample our sins underfoot and send them to the bottom of the sea!

Mic 7:20 You will show your faithfulness and constant love to your people, the descendants of Abraham and of Jacob, as you promised our ancestors long ago.

Micah 7:1-20

Micah 7 – Israel’s Confession and Comfort

A. God’s people humbly confess their sin.

1. (1-4) An honest confession of their sinful state.

Woe is me!

**For I am like those who gather summer fruits,
Like those who glean vintage grapes;**

***There is no* cluster to eat**

Of the first-ripe fruit *which* my soul desires.

The faithful *man* has perished from the earth,

And *there is* no one upright among men.

They all lie in wait for blood;

Every man hunts his brother with a net.

That they may successfully do evil with both hands—

The prince asks *for gifts*,

The judge *seeks* a bribe,

And the great *man* utters his evil desire;

So they scheme together.

The best of them *is* like a brier;

The most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge;

The day of your watchman and your punishment comes;

Now shall be their perplexity.

a. **Woe is me!** On behalf of the sinful nation, the Prophet Micah confessed the sin of God’s people. First, he recognized that their sin had left them *impoverished* (**there is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires**). Then he described some of their specific sins and their general character, revealing their deeply ingrained sin against others.

b. **The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity:** When the sinner is immersed in sin and feeling successful, they feel like there is no price to pay for their sin. Nevertheless, there will come **the day of your watchman and your punishment**. The confident self-confidence of the sinner will be turned to **perplexity**.

2. (5-7) *Crumbling relationships among God's people.*

**Do not trust in a friend;
Do not put your confidence in a companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth
From her who lies in your bosom.
For son dishonors father,
Daughter rises against her mother,
Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
A man's enemies *are* the men of his own household.
Therefore I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
My God will hear me.**

a. **Do not trust in a friend:** Because of their rampant sin and selfishness, personal relationships had crumbled among God's people. One could not **trust in a friend** or put **confidence in a companion**, and even blood relatives were at war with each other.

b. **Therefore I will look to the LORD... my God will hear me:** In this sin-immersed culture, there were few people to give confidence or compassion – so one could only **look to the LORD**.

i. This was a *bad* thing, because people should be honorable and trustworthy enough so that we can find confidence and compassion from them. Nevertheless, God can use this as a *good* thing, because it forces us to put our trust in the only One

who can never let us down – the **God of my salvation.**

3. (8-10) *The humble state of God's people.*

**Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The LORD will be a light to me.
I will bear the indignation of the LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case
And executes justice for me.
He will bring me forth to the light;
I will see His righteousness.
Then *she who is* my enemy will see,
And shame will cover her who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will see her;
Now she will be trampled down
Like mud in the streets.**

a. **Do not rejoice over me, my enemy:** Micah spoke for those brought low by personal sin and the sin of the community. In their humble place, he warned their enemies to not **rejoice** over their condition because **when I fall, I will arise** and **when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me.** "You see me brought low now, but you should know that it isn't for long. God will lift me up."

b. **I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him:** Speaking for the sinful people, Micah honorably took responsibility for their sin. The idea is, "I know that I have sinned, and so I will accept my correction." Micah knew that God's people would stay in their low place **until He pleads my case**

and executes justice for me. They were totally abandoned unto God's care.

i. "Herein is discovered the difference between remorse and penitence. In remorse a man is sorry for himself; he mourns over his sin because it has brought suffering to him. In penitence he is grieved by the wrong sin has done to God; he yields his personal suffering in the confidence that by it God is setting him free from his sin." (Morgan)

c. **He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness:** At the same time, there was complete confidence in the salvation of God and their vindication before their enemies. This shows that God's people knew their sinful state, but they also knew the greatness of God's redemption.

B. God's comfort and pardon to His people.

1. (11-13) *The restored city of the people of God.*

**In the day when your walls are to be built,
In that day the decree shall go far and wide.
In that day they shall come to you
From Assyria and the fortified cities,
From the fortress to the River,
From sea to sea,
And mountain to mountain.
Yet the land shall be desolate
Because of those who dwell in it,
And for the fruit of their deeds.**

a. **In the day when your walls are to be built, in that day the decree shall go far and wide:** When the time comes for Israel's restoration, God will send a call out **far and wide** to gather and restore His people.

b. **Yet the land shall be desolate because of those who dwell in it:** When God gathers Israel for

restoration, they will come to a **desolate** land, ruined because of the judgment of God on the sin of His people.

2. (14-15) *God cares for His people as in days of old.*

**Shepherd Your people with Your staff,
The flock of Your heritage,
Who dwell solitarily *in* a woodland,
In the midst of Carmel;
Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead,
As in days of old.**

**"As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
I will show them wonders."**

a. **Shepherd Your people with Your staff:** After God's people will be brought back to the place they belong, they will be lovingly cared for by the LORD Himself. The LORD *shepherds* them and *feeds* them.

b. **As in the days of old:** There was a time when God's people enjoyed this kind of close relationship with Him. Now, that previous relationship will be restored, and He will **show them wonders**. The **wonders** will come *out of* the close relationship with the Shepherd.

3. (16-17) *The nations are brought low before restored Israel.*

**The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth;
Their ears shall be deaf.
They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth.
They shall be afraid of the LORD our God,
And shall fear because of You.**

a. **The nations shall see and be ashamed:** When Israel is restored to the land and enjoys a restored relationship with the LORD, then those who opposed God's people will see how wrong they were to fight against them.

b. **They shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of You:** Seeing the greatness of God's restoration will make the nations respect the LORD in a way they didn't before. They will see the power and love of God *in action*.

4. (18-20) *The glorious mercy and pardon of God.*

**Who is a God like You,
Pardoning iniquity
And passing over the transgression of the remnant of
His heritage?
He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights *in* mercy.
He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins
Into the depths of the sea.
You will give truth to Jacob
And mercy to Abraham,
Which You have sworn to our fathers
From days of old.**

a. **Who is a God like You:** In light of the glorious restoration given by the LORD to Israel, Micah glorified the God of such great forgiveness (**pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage**). Micah saw that God's forgiveness was so great, that it can't even be compared to what often passes for forgiveness among men.

i. Boice on **Who is a God like You:** "It is a theme verse and appropriately ends the book. For it is a play

on Micah's name. Micah means 'Who is like Yahweh?'"

b. **Because He delights in mercy:** *Why* does God have such great mercy and forgiveness to His people? The reasons are in *Him*, not in His people. It is simply **because He delights in mercy.**

i. If God **delights in mercy**, *then why are some men lost?* Because God doesn't delight in mercy so as to shame His justice. God opens His hand of mercy to all who will receive it, but those who will not receive His mercy can blame only themselves.

ii. If God **delights in mercy**, *then why is He not always, on every occasion merciful?* Because there comes time when the guilty must be punished. God's judgments are in themselves expressions of mercy because they are like the cutting away of cancer. The surgery hurts but must take place or the whole body will die.

iii. If God **delights in mercy**, *then why is there an unpardonable sin?* We should be grateful that there is only one unpardonable sin – the sin of rejecting His mercy.

iv. If God **delights in mercy**, *then why do I feel that He can't have mercy on me?* In such cases, we should trust God and not our feelings. "Whatever despair may whisper or doubt may suggest, one text of Scripture is worth fifty fears and doubts, or fifty thousand either... All objections to the delight of God in mercy are but illusions of your brain, or delusions of your heart" (Spurgeon).

v. If God is this merciful to those who sin against Him, do we have any justification for not showing mercy to those who sin against us? "To all of you I would say – take care, as you expect the mercy of God, to deal it

out to others. Never say, 'I won't forgive,' for you seal your own condemnation when you do, and if you forgive not your brother his trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive you. You have chosen your own destruction when you shut the door against your child, or against your neighbor, and say, 'I will treasure up that enmity as long as I live.' I tell you, sirs, your offerings at God's altar are an abomination to him until you have forgiven every one of your fellows his trespasses" (Spurgeon).

c. **He will again have compassion on us:** God's people once knew His compassion, but they resisted and rejected it. Now they could know it again, confident that **He will again have compassion on us.**

i. His **compassion** is shown in that the LORD **will subdue our iniquities.** He loves us as sinners but loves us too much to leave us in our sin. His **compassion** saves us from our sin.

ii. His **compassion** is shown in that the LORD **will cast all our sins in to the depths of the sea.** God will not hold on to our sin but forgive us instead. This means there is no probation with God's forgiveness. He doesn't forgive our sins just to leave them around to hang over our head. In His **compassion**, He does away with our sins, casting them **to the depths of the sea** – and then He puts a "No Fishing" sign there!

iii. His **compassion** is shown in that the LORD **will give truth to Jacob.** God's people not only need the His mercy, they need His **truth** and He is compassionate enough to give His **truth** as He gives mercy and pardon.

d. **Which you have sworn to our fathers from days of old:** In concluding His prophecy, Micah saw God's future work as a continuation of His past work to the

fathers of Israel. Micah knew that the same love, compassion, and mercy He showed to their **fathers** was available to them today – if they received it in faith.